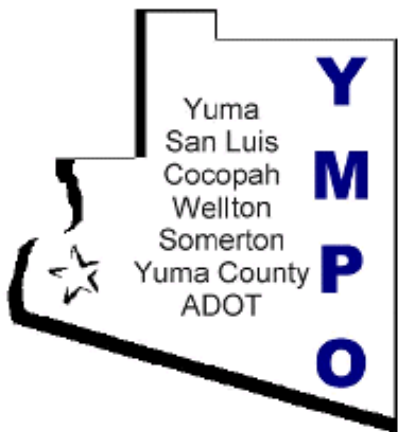


Yuma Metropolitan Planning Organization

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN



A PUBLIC PROACTIVE INVOLVEMENT PROCESS FOR DEVELOPMENT OF



Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)
Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)
Air Quality Conformity Analysis (AQCA)
Environmental Documents (ED)
Regional Transportation Coordination
Plan (RCP)

Prepared by the
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I. PURPOSE

The purpose of a public participation plan is to ensure a proactive public involvement process that assures the opportunity for the public to be involved in all phases of the planning process by providing complete information, timely public notice, opportunities for making comments, full access to key decisions, and early and continuing involvement in developing transportation plans and programs.

Within these programs the following components are defined for the purpose of establishing the proper participation protocols:

- A. **Transportation Improvement Program (TIP):** The Transportation Improvement Program represents the project selection document for federally-funded projects. Project priorities are indicated by the year the project is programmed. For federally-funded projects, the year programmed as indicated in the TIP refers to the Federal fiscal year ending September 30th. Under federal guidelines, the TIP is a sequential, multi-year (3-5 years) program of transportation projects which is consistent with and implements the goals and objectives as described in the approved Regional Transportation Plan.
- B. **Regional Transportation Plan (RTP):** This long-range plan (covering a span of 23 years) developed under Federal Transportation Planning Guidelines is designed to provide the continual development of a complete, dependable, efficient, safe, aesthetic, and economical regional transportation system.
- C. **Air Quality Conformity Analysis (AQCA):** The YMPO has the responsibility to ensure that the transportation plans and programs within the YMPO planning boundaries conform to the state and national air quality plans and standards. Specifically, the emissions generated from proposed projects in the YMPO's five year Transportation Improvement Program and the twenty-three year Regional Transportation Plan must be consistent with and conform to air quality standards. The YMPO is required to undertake an air quality conformity analysis for two reasons specific (1) to ensure that transportation investments (projects), strategies and programs, taken as a whole, have air quality impacts consistent with and conforming to state and national air quality plans and standards; and (2) to ensure that neither the transportation system as a whole nor individual transportation projects cause new air quality violations or worsen existing conditions.
- D. **Environmental Documents (ED):** Those documents developed by the YMPO that relate directly to environmental policy.
- E. **Regional Transportation Coordination Plan (RCP):** The plan is meant to establish goals, criteria and strategies for delivering efficient, coordinated services to elderly, underemployed or otherwise financially disadvantaged persons and persons with disabilities.

II. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

To participate is to express one's self at the proper time and in the proper forum. Public participation means participation in planning by people (public) outside the Yuma Metropolitan

Planning Organization (YMPO) and its member entities, by planning and engineering professionals and by those who are not professional planners or government officials. It is a process of taking part in the transportation planning and decision-making that affect the community.

The YMPO efforts to secure participation will be targeted to stakeholders, who are individuals or entities that could be significantly affected by the transportation plan recommendations or could significantly influence implementation. Stakeholders include, but are not limited to: the general public; low income, minority and disabled communities; neighborhood representatives; chambers of commerce; special transportation interests such as freight shippers, transit users and bicycle organizations; local officials; military installations; and federal and state transportation agencies.

A. Why the YMPO needs the public involved in Transportation Planning:

1. The public has the right to have a strong voice in all matters of public policy, including planning.
2. Only the public can provide the information needed to develop, maintain, and carry out an effective transportation plan. Planning staff, consultants and local officials need comments from those who know the community best: the people who live and work there.
3. Involvement informs and educates the public about transportation planning and creates an informed community, which in turn leads to better planning.
4. Participation gives the public a sense of ownership of the plan. It fosters cooperation among the public and between them and the YMPO.

B. The public participation plan contains the following elements:

1. **Involvement Opportunities**
Provide the opportunity for the public to be involved in all phases of the planning process. See Sections III, VI and VII for details.
2. **Communication**
Establish mechanisms for maintaining communications between the public and local officials such as processes like mailings, legal ads, displays and newsletters. See Section IV for details.
3. **Information**
Assure that technical information is available and in simplified, understandable form. See Section V for details.
4. **Response to Public Input**
A description of the methods used to respond to comments from the public. See Section VIII for details.
5. **Advisory Committees**
The use of the committees and the means of providing a cross-section of affected citizens on the advisory committees. See Section IX for details.

C. To achieve success, each planning process conducted by the MPO will include a public participation analysis based on the following five goals:

1. Generate Excitement and Enthusiasm

Keeping the public excited about the process will lead to higher levels of participation, and contribute to a plan that is bolstered by public support. In other words, events should have a “fun” factor, and the project’s image should be positive.

2. Provide Info to the Public

Provide detailed current information to the public, so that the public can make informed and up to date choices and recommendations for the project.

3. Allow for Diverse Public Involvement

Provide opportunities for a wide range of members of the public; (i.e., citizens with different interests,) to be involved is the third objective. An effort must be made to coordinate with individuals, institutions, or organizations to use community-based public involvement strategies that will reach out to members of the disabled, minority, special needs and low-income communities.

4. Meet Legal Requirements

This is the most basic objective. All planning processes will meet legal meeting notice requirements and will provide opportunities for the public to speak and give input during hearings.

5. Special Accommodations

The notification of public meetings must include a request that persons requiring special accommodations to reach the meeting or have special needs when attending (such as alternative formats like larger print, providing an interpreter for non-English speakers or a signer for the hearing impaired) at least 10 to 14 days in advance so the requests can be met. Give the name, phone number and email address of the contact person. When providing opportunities for public participation, it is also important to provide other means besides written communications, such as a personal interview or using audio or video recording devices to document oral comments. Computers can be provided so that participants can type in their comments, or have someone type in their oral comments for them.

III. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS

To have a proactive public involvement process, the YMPO will provide a public comment period of 30 days on the proposed public participation procedure to be used in transportation planning process. The procedures will inform the public about how, when, and where they may participate. Public notification will be as provided in Section IV.

IV. PUBLIC NOTICE

A. Official notification of meetings, hearings or other significant events will be provided in the following manner:

1. Publication will be at least thirty (30) days prior for public hearings and an adequate period for public meetings. An explanation of the content, along with the date, time and the place of the meeting will be published in both English and Spanish at least once in a newspaper of general circulation in the Yuma area.
2. The official notice will be published as a display advertisement in the non-legal section of the newspaper.

B. The YMPO will also utilize the following techniques to disseminate the information to a larger audience:

1. Information regarding meetings and events will be placed on the YMPO web site: www.ympo.org
2. Public Service Announcements and interviews on radio, government cable, and television to explain subject matter and promote participation.
3. Articles and Press Releases for the newspaper or other widely circulated publications.
4. Mass mailings through utility bills or other documents that are periodically issued to the community at large.
5. Use of advisory committees for community involvement.
6. Informal presentations at regional sites, open houses, round tables, or other community forums.
7. Formal presentations to various service clubs, civic and professional groups.
8. Mailings to select individuals, groups or interests that have expressed interest or made comments at meetings.

PUBLIC NOTIFICATION METHODS

NOTIFICATION AND PARTICIPATION TECHNIQUES	√ Planned			* Encouraged	
	RTP	AIR QUALITY	TIP	ED/AQCA	RCP
Printed Notification					
Newspaper Advertisements	√	√	√	√	√
YMPO Web Site	√	√	√	√	√
Articles	√	√	*	*	*
Press Release	√	√	*	*	√
Mass Mailing	√				
Flyers	√				
TV/Radio					
Public Service Announcements	√	*	*	√	
Interviews	√	*	*		
Public Cable Channels	√	*	*		
Community Forums					
Public Information Meetings	√	√	*		*
Public Meetings	√	√	√	√	√
Group Presentations	√	*	*		√
Advisory Committee	√	√	√	√	√

V. ACCESS TO INFORMATION

The YMPO will provide the public with reasonable and timely access to technical and policy information relating to the data or content used in the development of transportation plans, programs and projects. Standard documents will be available on the YMPO web site www.ympo.org and at the YMPO office 502 S Orange Ave. during normal working hours. Copies of draft plans will also be placed at the main branch location of the Yuma County Library District.

VI. PUBLIC MEETINGS

Public information meetings will be held at various Yuma area locations to inform the public of the planning process and to solicit ideas, input and feedback. Public hearings and public information meetings will be held at locations accessible to and at times convenient to minority and disabled residents. The intent of holding public informational meetings at diversified locations is to solicit broad public comments. General locations of meetings will be in the City of San Luis, City of Somerton, City of Yuma, Yuma County Foothills, and Town of Wellton.

Notice of public hearings and public informational meetings will be given in accordance with and as listed in Section IV. A reasonable attempt will be made to notify organizations representing minority and disabled people and a request made that they provide their members with meeting notice and information.

Special arrangements will be made to accommodate persons with disabilities, low income, and people who do not speak English. For those without transportation and the disabled, the YMPO may provide free transportation via public transit to the meetings. Interpreters will be provided to accommodate Spanish-speaking individuals.

VII. VISUALIZATION

In order to ensure that the public is able to visualize the potential impact of any particular transportation or planning project, the YMPO will provide visual aids at public meetings and/or at the YMPO office. The visual aids may include but are not limited to the following types:

- A. Power Point Presentations
- B. Story Boards
- C. Project Renderings
- D. Regional and Project Level Maps
- E. Satellite Photos
- F. Project Site Photos
- G. Charts and Graphs
- H. "Before and After" Depictions

VIII. OPPORTUNITIES FOR PARTICIPATION

The YMPO will take a proactive approach to providing the opportunity for the public to be involved early and with a continuing involvement in all phases of the planning process. Extensive public notice will be undertaken of public information meetings and hearings as listed in Section IV and access to information as listed in Section V. Prior to the beginning of the public

participation process, a list of names and addresses of citizens and organizations will be developed that will be contacted on a continued basis to serve as a base of interested citizens for input and comment. This list will be expanded as additional citizens attend the informational public meetings and make comments.

IX. CONSULTATION WITH REGIONAL PARTNERS

YMPO will coordinate meetings with local, state, regional, and tribal entities that are affected by its planning projects. For example, the YMPO may host a meeting(s) to review and receive comment concerning transportation-related projects in addition to mass mailings and all other official comment periods. Below is a general list of the regional partners that should be invited to participate, and the list should be updated to reflect changes in federal and state transportation planning regulations.

- A. Arizona Department of Transportation Office of Environmental Services
- B. Cocopah Indian Tribe
- C. Quechan Indian Tribe
- D. Bureau of Indian Affairs
- E. Arizona Department of Environmental Quality
- F. Arizona Game and Fish Department
- G. Arizona State Historic Preservation Office
- H. Marine Corps Air Station Yuma
- I. U.S. Army Yuma Proving Grounds
- J. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- K. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- L. U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- M. U.S. Department of the Interior (the Bureaus of Reclamation and Land Management)
- N. Federal Highway Administration
- O. Arizona Department of Transportation
- P. U.S. Forest Service
- Q. National Park Service
- R. Arizona Department of Water Resources
- S. Arizona State Land Department

This list assumes that the local government agencies that comprise the YMPO TAC and Executive Board membership are automatically included in a Regional Partners list.

X. RESPONSE TO PUBLIC INPUT

Responses to questions and comments from the public concerning the public participation process, draft transportation plans, programs, or public agency consultation process will be made directly to the individual by letter or telephone call or by way of a periodic newsletter. A summary analysis and report on disposition of comments will be made a part of the final plan. Rationale for policy decisions will be available to the public in writing if requested.

XI. ADVISORY COMMITTEES

Advisory committees will be formed to advise the YMPO Executive Board and staff in the preparation and review of public participation plans, transportation plans, programs, and other related matters. There are two types of committees:

A. The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) is a permanent committee that is composed of technical, planning and or managerial staff representatives from each of the participating agencies of the YMPO. The membership of ten is as designated by the member agencies and number of members is fixed. In addition, there are ex-officio non-voting members from the Marine Corps Air Station, Bureau of Indian Affairs, and the Yuma Airport Authority. The TAC has an area representation makeup. Subcommittees of the TAC will be utilized to study issue areas not requiring the full TAC participation.

B. Specific citizen advisory committees will be formed on an ad hoc basis; members will be selected for their expertise, interest, or as an affected stakeholder. Examples are representatives of interest groups, transportation agencies, minorities, disabled, or representatives of geographical areas, such as neighborhood associations. The number of committee members will vary with the purpose for which the committee is formed. All committee members will have an equal voice in deliberations.

Examples of ad hoc advisory committees include: Transit Committee; Yuma County Transportation Consortium; Port Authority Formation Committee; Yuma County Pedestrian Safety Task Force, and Regional Transportation Plan Committee.

XII. TITLE VI

As part of the transportation planning process to meet the requirements of Title VI and to better serve the community the YMPO will reach out to the disadvantaged to ensure participation. Members of the Executive Board of the YMPO will continue to hold localized meetings in their respective areas where transportation issues are discussed. Advertising for major public meetings will be in both English and Spanish. Citizens that express interest or make comments at a public meeting will be put on a mailing list to be notified of other meetings and any proposed actions. For those without transportation and the disabled, the YMPO will provide free transportation via public transit to the meetings.

A reasonable attempt will be made to notify organizations representing minority and disabled people and a request made that they provide their members with meeting notice and information.

Attempts to have minority and disabled citizen representation on advisory committees will be made.

Native American representations in the planning process is assured because the Cocopah Indian Nation is a full member of the YMPO and have direct involvement in transportation decisions.

XIII. AMENDMENTS

Substantial changes or amendments to a transportation plan will be done only after the public has been notified of an intent to modify the plan, and only after the public has had 30 days to review and comment on the proposed substantial changes. Notice, access to information and all public meetings will be in accordance with and as listed in Sections IV, V, and VI respectively.

XIV. EXECUTIVE BOARD ACTION

The Executive Board of the YMPO will hold the final public hearing on the transportation plans. Notice of the time and place of the Public Hearing will be provided in accordance with the

notification requirements listed in Sections IV, V, and VI. Following the Public Hearing, the adoption of transportation and related plans will be by Resolution of the Executive Board.

XV. FOLLOW UP

This is the initial effort of the YMPO to formalize the public participation process for transportation and related plans. This document establishes the basic techniques for disseminating the information to the public and engaging the citizens in interactive discussions about the transportation planning process. The YMPO will continue to identify and pursue other ways to increase public knowledge and participation. A review of the effectiveness of the public involvement process will be made on a tri-annual basis.

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